

Life in Cobb County and on the Battlefield



Harper's Weekly artist Theodore R. Davis made this sketch of Kennesaw (then called Big Shanty) in June 1864. Right: Citizens of Cobb County used Georgia banknotes and Western & Atlantic Railroad "fare notes," recognized by the State of Georgia as currency for certain uses.

The rolling countryside around the Kennesaw Mountain battlefield was settled by whites in the 1830s on land taken from the Cherokee after the 1830 Indian Removal Act. By the time of the Civil War, Cobb County had become one of the most populous and wealthy counties in northwestern Georgia—at the time still called "Cherokee Georgia." Much of the county's prosperity derived from the Western & Atlantic Railroad, completed by 1850. This vital rail line provided easier access to distant markets and attracted new settlers from Georgia and other parts of the nation. The town of Kennesaw, then called Big Shanty, began as a construction camp for workers laying rails for the Western & Atlantic.

The Kennesaw Mountain region was the home of large and small planters and yeoman farmers. Most of the rural population lived in log cabins, or later in small frame homes as sawmills began providing lumber for building. Of the county's 14,242 people, 3,819 were enslaved workers. Few local farmers owned large numbers of slaves; most owned fewer than 10. While slaves on the larger plantations typically worked in gangs supervised by an overseer, those on smaller farms most likely worked in the field alongside their white owners.

By 1860 cotton was the dominant cash crop of the area, but most acreage was devoted to food production and free range pasturage for livestock, particularly hogs. Although

some farmers owned horses or mules, the most common draft animals were oxen. The largest industrial enterprise, the Roswell Mills complex, produced textiles, including "Roswell Grey" for Confederate uniforms. There were also grist mills, tanneries, and sawmills.

Marietta, the thriving county seat, was described in an 1864 article in the *New York Tribune*: "The town is a perfect grotto of shade. . . . There were during good times, sixteen stores, two druggists, eight groceries, three hotels, four churches . . . Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian and Episcopal, three female and one male school besides small schools for young children, all well patronized . . ." Marietta was

home to 2,680 residents, 1,175 of them slaves. Only 13 free African Americans are registered in the 1860 county census, all of them living in Marietta. They were free but not equal, their daily lives subject to numerous restrictions imposed by state laws and local codes.

By the beginning of the war a number of fine residences had been constructed in Marietta, often by families from coastal Georgia and South Carolina seeking the healthier climate of Piedmont Georgia during the summer malaria season. One Union soldier declared that Marietta was "The prettiest town in Northern Georgia."

Touring Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

This self-guiding auto tour (see map at right) takes you to the major points of interest. Each tour stop has parking and wayside exhibits. Short interpretive trails are located on the mountaintop, at Pigeon Hill, and at Cheatham Hill.

- 1 Kennesaw Mountain** An overlook near the summit offers a panoramic view of Atlanta and the northern Georgia terrain where Sherman's and Johnston's armies struggled in the late spring and summer of 1864. A short, moderately steep trail leads to the summit. Along the way are exhibits and gun emplacements dug by Confederates to control the Western & Atlantic (now CSX) Railroad.
- 2 24-Gun Battery** Located on a small, wooded rise facing Little Kennesaw and Pigeon Hill, this Federal gun emplacement accommodated four batteries, each containing six artillery pieces. These guns bombarded Confederate forces on Kennesaw Mountain off and on for 10 days.
- 3 Wallis House** Built by Josiah Wallis about 1853 and abandoned upon the approach of Sherman's armies, this house was Union Gen. Oliver O. Howard's headquarters during the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. It was earlier used as a Confederate hospital. General Sherman was at the Wallis House during the battle at Kolb's Farm.
- 4 Pigeon Hill** A foot trail leads to Confederate entrenchments on this mountain spur, where one of Sherman's two major attacks was repulsed.
- 5 Cheatham Hill** To protect this hill now named for Confederate Gen. Benjamin F. Cheatham, the Southerners created a salient (a protruding angle) in their lines. The fiercest fighting of the battle raged here at what came to be called the "Dead Angle." Along a trail to the imposing Illinois Monument are Confederate earthworks and markers where Union soldiers fell.
- 6 Sherman/Thomas Headquarters** The two Union generals met here to discuss, and ultimately order, an ill-fated frontal assault against Confederate Gen. William Hardee's troops entrenched atop Cheatham Hill.
- 7 Kolb's Farm** On the afternoon of June 22, 1864, Union soldiers repulsed Confederate General Hood's ill-fated attack just north of Powder Springs Road. Union Gen. Joseph Hooker used the Kolb House for his headquarters after the fight. The Kolb family cemetery is adjacent to the house.

Your Visit to the Battlefield

Begin your visit at the visitor center. Here you will find information, a short orientation film, exhibits, and a bookstore. Park staff can answer questions and help you plan your visit. The visitor center is open daily except Thanksgiving, December 25, and January 1. Hours vary seasonally. Call 770-427-4686 or visit www.nps.gov/kemo for specific times.

This is a day-use-only park. All gated lots have posted hours. Please refer to them before parking. Any vehicles left at the park after the posted closing time are subject to being ticketed and towed at the owner's expense.

The park has monuments, historical markers, cannon emplacements, and 19.7 miles of hiking trails. Ask a ranger about using your cell phone for the audio tour. Special programs are presented on weekends during peak season. A shuttle bus—mandatory transportation on weekends to the mountaintop—operates on the hour and half-hour starting at 10 am. Picnicking and recreational activities are allowed in designated locations only (see map). No overnight facilities are available in the park.

Trails The park trails offer short walks and long hikes. Starting at the visitor center, the round-trip distances are two miles, six miles, 11 miles, and 17 miles. All require moderately steep climbing. If you plan to hike any of the trails, be advised that there is limited water and no shelter or food along the way; conditions can be hazardous. Stay on trails, wear sturdy shoes, and be sure to carry water. The park has a diverse mix of flora and fauna often seen along the trails.

Accessibility The visitor center is fully accessible, with a museum tour for the visually- and hearing-impaired. Due to the nature of the historic terrain, trails have remained natural and have not been altered. The mountain road is paved. Our ADA-approved shuttle bus can accommodate special needs. We strive to make our facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. If you have special requirements, please call the visitor center at 770-427-4686 ext. 0 before your visit.

Pets All pets must be on a leash no longer than 6 feet and under physical control at all times. Please note: pets are NOT allowed in the visitor center, restrooms, or shuttle bus.

Getting Here From I-75, take exit 269 and drive 2.1 miles west on Barrett Parkway. Turn left onto Old US 41 and proceed 1.2 miles to Stilesboro Road at the first traffic light after entering the park. Turn right onto Stilesboro Road, then left through the park gate into the visitor center parking lot.

More Information
Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park
905 Kennesaw Mountain Drive
Kennesaw, GA 30152-4855
770-427-4686 / www.nps.gov/kemo

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities, visit www.nps.gov.

Kolb's Farm



Peter Valentine Kolb II was one of the earliest settlers of Cobb County. He built this house in the 1830s and operated a self-sufficient farm with 10 enslaved workers and about 600 acres of land. When the Federal troops approached the farm along Powder Springs Road in 1864, the Kolb family fled and did not return until the 1880s. The battle here on June 22, 1864 damaged the house and destroyed several outbuildings. The house has been restored to its historic appearance.

Illinois Monument



The Illinois Monument on Cheatham Hill is the largest monument on the battlefield. Dedicated in 1914, it honors the Illinois soldiers who served during the battle. Near the base of the monument is the entrance to a tunnel begun by Union soldiers intending to blow up the Confederate position with a mine.

Georgia Monument



The Georgia Monument honors all Georgians who fought in the war. It was dedicated in 1963 during the Civil War centennial celebration, but was improperly installed at the foot of Kennesaw Mountain rather than where Georgia troops fought.

